

Easthampton Retirement Board

Approved January 15, 2003

All travel-related expenses that are to be paid for by the Board shall be related to the purpose of the authorized travel and shall be cost effective. The following regulations are designed to accomplish that purpose.

Authorization for Travel and Travel-Related Expenses

The Board will pay for or make reimbursements to Board Members and staff for all travel and lodging expenses unless specifically excluded in these guidelines.

Travel and related expenses are to be approved by the Board in advance of the travel. Requests for travel by Board Members and staff shall be place on a board meeting agenda, discussed in open session, and approved by a majority vote of the Board present and voting. The meeting minutes shall reflect the Board's action and the extent of the authorization.

The nature of the travel, its purpose and estimated cost shall be outlined on a travel authorization form. The form must include an estimate of the cost of travel. Brochures for seminars or other presentations should accompany the request for travel where available.

Board Members shall provide a statement describing the presentation, conference or seminar to be entered into the minutes of the meeting following the travel.

Reimbursement

Requests for reimbursement shall be completed using the travel reimbursement form, and must be submitted within 60 days of the travel.

Itemized receipts are required for expenses over \$10.00. Smaller expenses, such as tips, are to be fully described.

Reimbursement shall be made only to the person who actually made payment for the expense.

The *Reimbursement Request Form* must be signed by the person seeking reimbursement and signed under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Expenditures which are not properly documented and are not in conformity with the Board's regulations will not be paid until the deficiencies are corrected.

Travel Arrangements

The administrator is responsible for making travel arrangements and for assisting Board Members in completing authorization and reimbursement forms. When making travel arrangements, business or government rates will be secured whenever possible.

An extended stay can be authorized if the net cost to the Board is lower. For example, if airline fare is lowered by staying an extra day, and the cost of accommodations and meals for the extra day results in a net savings to the Board, and extended stay can be authorized.

Transportation

Reimbursement will be allowed for airline, train, bus, automobile rental, taxi, or other forms of public transportation. Travel shall be at the most cost-effective mode, generally at coach/economy rates.

Rental cars can be obtained only from a national rental agency, and should be at the most cost effective rate. The automobile rented should be the smallest size car that is practical for the number of people who are traveling together. The renter is required to take optional insurance coverage.

Any accidents that occur while on Board-approved travel must be reported as soon as practicable, in writing to the appropriate authorities, with copies to the Board.

The traveler may use a personal automobile when that is the most cost-effective means of travel. The Board will reimburse the traveler at the rate of 32 cents per mile. The Board will reimburse for highway tolls and for parking fees.

Lodging

The administrator will negotiate the rate for accommodations in advance, and will obtain the most cost-effective rate available. The traveler is responsible for verifying that the rate charged is the rate negotiated.

Meals

The maximum amount that will be reimbursed, per day, for meals, is \$40.00. For travel to high-cost locations, higher limits may be allowed, and should be requested in the travel authorization process.

Reimbursement for the meals of others will be allowed only when approved by the Board in advance. The requester provides the names of the individuals, their affiliation, and the purpose of the meeting.

The Board will allow reimbursement for guest meals only if the meal is for a legitimate business purpose.

The Board prohibits reimbursement for a meal when the meal is included with the conference/seminar.

Miscellaneous Expenses

The Board will reimburse telephone expenses for business calls plus one personal call per day.

The Board will reimburse for business expenses related to the business of the Board, including fax charges, Internet connection fees, and copying charges.

Non-reimbursable Expenses

The Board will not reimburse the following expenses: meals included in registration fees alcoholic beverages, in-room movies laundry and dry-cleaning expenses, gym fees, airline club membership fees, fines related to traffic violations or parking violations, entertainment and recreation expenses.

Cash Advances

The Board will not grant cash advances for travel.

Credit Cards

A credit card in the name of the Easthampton Retirement Board can be obtained if the account has reasonable fees. This credit account is to be used only for the purposes of Board and staff travel expenses. Personal use of the card is prohibited.

Credit card billings are to be issued to the Retirement Board office. Users are required to provide receipts for all expenses included in the statement. If no receipt is provided, the user must reimburse the Board for the expense.

Credit cards are not to be used for purchase of supplies and equipment that can be purchased more cost-effectively through competitive bidding.

Personal Travel Combined with Board Related Travel

If personal travel is combined with Board-related travel, the personal portion of the trip will be clearly identified and paid for by the traveler. Any expenses incurred by a spouse, relative, friend or other individual accompanying a Board member or staff member will be considered personal expenses, and will not be reimbursed by the Board.

Payments or Reimbursements by Third Parties

Board Members and staff are prohibited from receiving anything of substantial value from any person, firm, partnership or other entity who may be reasonably expected to seek business, or is doing business, with the board.

In instances where a Board Member or staff member participates in a speaking engagement, the Board shall pay all costs and expenses related to the speaking engagement, provided that the Board Member or staff member complies with the Board's travel regulations.

The Board may accept reimbursement for travel-related expenses from a third-party when asked to speak in connection with their position with the Retirement Board

The speaking engagement must be formally scheduled on the agenda of a convention or conference.

The speaking engagement must be scheduled in advance of the Board Member's or staff member's arrival at the event.

The presentation must be before an organization that would normally have outside speakers address them at such an event.

The presentation cannot be perfunctory, but should significantly contribute to the event, taking into account such factors as the length of the speech, the size of the audience, and the extent to which the speaker is providing substantive or unique information or viewpoints.

The Retirement Board can be reimbursed by a third party for expenses only to the extent necessary for making the speech or presentation.

The Board explicitly prohibits the “indirect” providing to or receipt of anything of substantial value from any person, firm, association or other entity.

Under no circumstances can a Board Member or Board staff member receive reimbursement or any other payment or compensation from a third party.

Acceptance of an honorarium or other form of compensation is prohibited.

Violation of Travel Policy Guidelines

Any violation of the above travel policy guidelines will be reviewed by the Retirement Board, and appropriate reparations or repayments will be required. The Board views any violation to the proposed regulations of travel as a very serious matter. The Board will comply with provisions outlined in the Commission’s “Violation of These Guidelines or Board Travel Regulations” (2.14).